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CAMPING FOR BLIND PEOPLE

By
Carl Shoemaker
Founder and Co-ordinator of Beacon Lodge-Camp for the Blind
Pennsylvania

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I

In discussing "Camping for Blind People", it might be well for us to first consider: What is camping? Why differentiate between camping for blind people and camping in general?

As we think of camping, we may think of a group of Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, an army, or any group pitching tents or living in cabins, or perhaps a family on a vacation in the mountains. Camping for blind people, as I think of it, is the gathering together of a number of blind individuals who will temporarily live together in cabins, a lodge or dormitory. During this time they will enjoy many indoor and outdoor activities together, as on a vacation; they will revive old friendships and cultivate new ones; and at the same time, they will develop additional skills and receive, from the people with whom they associate, lasting impressions which will contribute in some degree to their acceptance of their visual handicap and to their ability to better cope with problems in connection with this handicap.

A camping program for blind people need not differ greatly from one designed for the sighted. All that is needed would be a few adaptations. The buildings need not be different - just some slight adjustments are helpful for freedom in moving about, such as the installation of guide wires or guide rails, a mat at the top or bottom of steps to indicate stairways, etc.

II

Camping for blind people does become very meaningful and important to the majority who participate. We have observed that, for

many, it is their first experience away from home since blindness occurred. Many come to camp with great hesitation and a certain amount of fear, often against the advice of over-protective loved ones. However, they gradually discover they can get along without the over-protection, and develop new friendships among people with problems similar to theirs and, surprisingly, find that many of their problems can be overcome. Girl meets boy and friendship develops and occasionally, romance flourishes.

A blind camper learns to organize his personal belongings and to find them readily; he learns to get around within the building and later outdoors; with assistance and then independently. He develops better dining habits, better grooming and he participates in numerous activities which surprise him with his achievements. Quite often, he goes home a different person, motivated and inspired to move out of his solitary home environment into the community and its various activities. He may even call his Vocational and Rehabilitation Counselor or local agency, requesting help to secure a job. He is now filled with ambition and confident of his abilities, since he has learned, by close association with others, that many blind people are working and earning their own way independently. Added to this, he is a few pounds heavier and a little more tanned. Yes, camping for blind people is worthwhile and in the case of many, a special camp for the blind is where they should have their first camping experience.

III

HOW THE PROGRAM OF CAMPING FOR THE BLIND DEVELOPED IN PENNSYLVANIA

In November of 1947, a group of interested blind people met in Philadelphia to determine how best to use a few acres of land that had been given to the Federation of the Blind. This land had been

donated with the stipulation that it be used for recreation purposes within the next ten years. The gathering included men and women in work for the blind in some phase, i.e. State Council for the Blind, Department of Public Assistance, Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, Philadelphia Lighthouse of the Blind and the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind. It was determined, at this meeting, that Pennsylvania needed a summer camp for blind people - many other states had such camps and they were proving to be very successful. Committees were appointed and, at a subsequent meeting, two months later, January 31, 1948, also in Philadelphia, reports indicated that the proposed land was not suited for a Summer camp. However, it was learned by Carl Shoemaker, Chairman of the Research Committee, that a large tract of land in Central Pennsylvania, with buildings on it, was available for $12,500. This latter tract of land seemed to be worthy of further study and a committee, along with Thomas Karen, a Camp Consultant, was appointed to look over the recommended camp property.

At an April meeting, additional reports were given which indicated that the property in question had been visited by the committee and the Camp Consultant, and it was found to be admirably suited for development as a camp for the blind. The group, attending this April meeting, recommended that a Corporation be formed to raise funds to purchase the property and to operate a camp for blind people thereon. Subsequently, Beacon Lodge - Camp for the Blind was chartered on August 16, 1948 in the Mifflin County Court and its aims and objectives were stated as follows:

A. To provide and promote recreation, rehabilitation and personal adjustment for blind and partially blind of Pennsylvania; to maintain camps and centers for such purposes.

B. To acquire by gift, lease or purchase, real and personal property for such purposes.

C. To promote projects and enterprises to defray the cost of maintenance of such camps and centers.

During the next year and a half, fund-raising activities were carried out through Lions Clubs and individuals, until at last, on March 1, 1950, sufficient funds were secured to purchase the property with a first mortgage, and plans were made to conduct the first camp season during the Summer of that year.

HOW MANAGED

The Charter provides that the Corporation be managed by a Board of Directors - there are 30 members on the Board as provided in the by-laws. The Board meets semi-annually and special meetings are called by the President when necessary. The Executive Committee meets at the call of the President and the Co-ordinator serves as the Administrator of all business between meetings.

IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

Beacon Lodge - Camp for the Blind is beautifully situated in the hills of Pennsylvania along the winding blue Juniata River. It comprises 467 acres, more than 400 of these acres being woodland. A reservoir provides ample water supply and a trout stream weaves through the property into the Juniata River. The main building is a large twenty-eight room stone and frame house, with another two-story building located nearby. The original purchase included a boat house, which was converted into sleeping facilities, and a dance pavilion, which has since been destroyed by fire. The main lodge is a well-constructed building which had originally been built as a private home and then used as a camp. Since the buildings were vacant for a

number of years before we purchased the property, many improvements and repairs were necessary. The property was finally prepared for the first camp season which opened on July 6, 1950 and a small staff was secured. We were now ready to embark on a program of camping for the blind of Pennsylvania.

V

OUR FIRST CAMP SEASON

As we currently review our report of the first camp season in 1950, it is quite obvious that many changes have occurred. At that time, we had a staff consisting of a Camp Director, Program Director, Crafts Instructor, two housekeepers, a Cook and a Cook's Helper. Our program staff of two people offered the following activities: group singing, dancing, musical numbers, readings, bingo parties, etc. Eighty-five people from various sections of Pennsylvania stayed at the camp for 111 camper weeks during this initial six-week encampment. In spite of being under-staffed and having very little experience, our guests cultivated new friendships and derived real pleasure from the few activities offered in the atmosphere of this new and beautiful camp, created especially for the blind of Pennsylvania.

Contrasting this 1950 camp program with that of 1959, as reflected in the forth-coming discussion, will in no way detract from the accomplishments of our first camp season. It will only serve to strengthen the convictions of those blind individuals who met in 1947 and 1948 to pioneer in our Pennsylvania camping program. A poem written by one of our campers, Robert Brown, truly portrays the feeling and love of many of our early campers at Beacon Lodge. Here is the poem:

SUNSET

When the sun sets on "Vacations for the Blind"
And its fountains spray with crimson mingles gold,
Then the twilight lends its hue,
Blending purple in with blue,
And the robe of night its mysteries enfold.

Like a beacon's beam, it can be seen afar -
God grant that those having sight may stand in awe,
Feel that inner, love-born light,
That their eyes, once holden, might
See the vision that its founders, blind men, saw.

These were Roman, Negro, Gentile, Jew and Greek,
With a common blood, they heard a common call;
May their work in unity
Help a troubled world to see,
Know the God who is the Father of us all.

There's a reservoir, a spring, a "wishing well",
Dance Pavilion and a boat house by the brook
That goes on its merry way,
With a soft, enchanting lay,
Leaving euphony in every crannied nook.

High above the Black Road overhangs a ledge -
Nature's hand put unique rock formations there,
In a cavern, high and wide,
Miles deep in the Mountainside,
And the ledge, she fashioned into the "Kings Chair".

On the Blue Ridge, with its forest-breath perfumed,
From the breakers in the valley, far below,
Faintly comes a muffled roar,
Echoed from the Eastern shore,
Voices of the Juniata's peaceful flow.

From the terrace, thru the spacious porte-cochere
The wide corridors, the court, the winding stairs,
Tho' its many guests are blind,
Readily the way they find,
And with willing hands they deftly make repairs.

While the monarch of the day hides in the West,
And ten million distant suns come into view,
Like the vanishing of sight,
It unveils another light,
And they patiently await the dawn, anew.

VI

IMPROVING THE PROGRAM

The program of the first camp season was very limited as

to variety and quality, and operated with insufficient staff, and in facilities still in need of repairs and improvements; however it was a good beginning. Each year, thereafter, the attendance increased, sometimes as much as 30 per cent over the previous year.

In 1952 an Extension Education Program was approved by the Department of Public Instruction, which enabled the camp to employ qualified instructors to serve as counselors, whose salaries were paid by State funds under the program sponsored by the Newton-Wayne School District. Of course, we still had to take care of the salaries of domestic help, the Caretaker, maintenance workers, etc. The school-sponsored program, however, has certainly been a great boon and has probably helped more than anything else to bring about the fine program of activities which we now enjoy at Beacon Lodge. The numerous indoor and outdoor activities which we now offer comprise a wide range of opportunities for our campers whereby they may engage in activities of their choice. We now have 14 staff members who are sponsored by the Captain Jack Joint School District of Mount Union. This results in a well-organized and supervised group of activities under competent leadership.

In 1953 we were fortunate in securing Clyde L. Downs as our Camp Director. He had taught 18 years, in the New York Institute for the Blind and had directed Camp Wapanacki, the Institute's Camp for Blind Children for ten years. Through his experience and able direction, camp services, as well as the overall program, became much more interesting, efficient and purposeful. He has been able and willing to face all problems and arrive at solutions, such as personal problems of campers and employees alike. He has the ability to prepare an effective program of activities, always conscious of the limitations of our camper group, and arranging for the necessary safety

measures. He is able to consider blind people as individuals and to treat them accordingly and he has been able to impart his knowledge to the entire staff. There is no doubt but that it is his leadership and direction which have been the important factors in the upgrading of our camping program. He is our present Camp Director and the beloved friend of all campers who have been guests at Beacon Lodge during his many years of service.

In addition to our Camp Director, we now have a House Director, Nurse, Program Director, Music Director, Waterfront Director, Assistant Waterfront Director, Arts and Crafts Instructor, General Counselors, Cook, Assistant Cook, Cook's Helper, Relief Cook, Dishwasher, four Housekeeper-Waitresses, Canteen Manager, Maintenance Worker and General Relief Worker. Relief workers make it possible for each employee to have a 24-hour leave each week.

The camp is operated for 10 weeks each summer, and with the capable supervision of our Camp Director, and the cooperation of these staff members, our guests are housed in clean, comfortable living quarters; served delicious, well-balanced meals; and offered a varied program of recreation, rehabilitation and personal adjustment. Our year-around staff includes the Co-ordinator, Bookkeeper, Caretaker and Office Secretary - all working on a part-time basis.

Campers come to Beacon Lodge by car, train or bus. If they come by public conveyance, a camp vehicle is dispatched to meet them, either in Mount Union or Lewistown. Those who come by car are usually brought by members of their own family or members of their sponsoring organization. We are always pleased to welcome those who provide transportation for our guests. It gives us an excellent opportunity to acquaint them with our fine camp, and we feel that once they have

actually seen Beacon Lodge, they will be more inspired to tell others of the beneficial program which is available for the visually handicapped.

VII

TRAINING OF STAFF

A week before the opening for campers, our staff comes in for a pre-camp training program which includes: 1. Introductions and a short history of the camp; 2. Discussion of counselors' importance to the camp; 3. A session to acquaint the counselors with the various facilities and the overall camp program; 4. Training for fire evacuation, the use of fire extinguishers and the use of recreational equipment; 5. Orientation to camp program, physical layout and general camp safety.

VIII

With improved facilities during the past ten years and an enlarged and better-qualified staff, the adult attendance at our camp during 1959 was 300. A typical day at Beacon Lodge starts with campers arising at 8:00 A.M.

8:30 A.M. - Breakfast

9:00 - 9:05 A.M. - Announcements

9:05 - 9:30 A.M. - Personal chores such as bed making,etc

9:30 - 10:00 A.M. - Card and letter writing

10:00 - 12:00 Noon - Morning activities, which offer campers the opportunity to participate in one of three scheduled activities, are carried out simultaneously. Each may select the one that appeals to him the most. The program is flexible enough so that if no one shows an interest in a specified activity, the Program Director reassigns the counselor to where he is most needed.

12:00 - 1:00 P.M. - Lunch

1:00 - 2:00 P.M. - Free Period

2:00 - 4:00 P.M. - Afternoon activity period. Two or three activities are also scheduled, once again giving the camper the choice of selecting the one that he enjoys the most.

5:30 - 6:30 P.M. - Dinner

8:00 - 10:00 P.M. - Evening activities scheduled.

10:00 - 11:30 P.M. - Social hours

12:00 Midnight - Lights Out.

Each of the activity periods during the day is announced over a public address system and announcements pertaining to the program are also made in the dining room following each meal. There is also a bulletin board listing all activities in Braille and print for the benefit of the campers and staff.

IX

ACTIVITIES

The following activities were offered to all our campers who attended during the 1959 camp season and, in making a study of the interests that the campers exhibited, we have grouped them as being excellent, good, fair or poor.

Activities With Excellent Attendance

1. Bowling
2. Musical Programs
3. Campfire Programs
4. Stump the Maestro and Name That Tune
5. Bus Ride
6. Bingo
7. Pizza Party
8. Arts and Crafts
9. Orientation program
10. Vesper Services
11. Shopping trip
12. Popping corn
13. Horse shoes
14. Hi-Fi Demonstration
15. Farm tour with hayride
16. Going to the County Fair

Activities With Good Attendance

1. Motor boating with instruction
2. General swimming in the afternoon
3. Musical games
4. Overnight hike
5. Basketball
6. Hiking
7. Song sessions
8. Toe tag
9. Water carnival
10. Social dancing
11. Spelling bee
12. Cane travel lessons

Activities With Fair Attendance

1. Card writing
2. Story reading
3. Hayride
4. Indoor activities
5. Artificial respiration instruction
6. Square dancing instruction
7. Panel discussion
8. Dance instruction
9. Talent show practice
10. Rowing Instruction

Activities With Poor Attendance

1. Skating
2. Baseball lingo
3. Tug of war
4. Chess tournament
5. Fishing
6. Checker tournament
7. Novelty races

This is just one check and we feel that it is far from being perfect, however, the information has been taken into consideration by our Program Director as he plans our current activities, always keeping in mind that we want to plan activities which will be of interest and of benefit to the camper. The camper can, however, if he wishes, take part in none of the planned activities, but rather, finding a comfortable spot, he can relax and talk with a new friend or an old acquaintance.

One of the activities of continual interest to a select group, and of particular value to them, is organized swimming classes and free swimming periods in the 50x25 foot concrete pool. This

health department approved pool and filter house constitutes one of our finest facilities. Many hours of cooling fun are enjoyed by campers and during a recent camping season, 120 received swimming lessons. Qualified life guards and competent instructors are in charge of this activity at all times.

X

OUR FIRST CAMP FOR CHILDREN

One of the greatest strides forward in Beacon Lodge history occurred during the 1959 camp season when for the first time, we featured an experimental camp for blind children. Through the cooperation of Northern Liberties Lions Club of Philadelphia, and especially one of its members, Will N. Ohlbaum, 10 children were taken at the camp for the first two weeks of the 1959 season. The results were so encouraging to Beacon Lodge's administration, and so worthwhile with respect to the children themselves, that 40 others were registered during the last two weeks of August, making a total of 50 children at this experimental camp.

One of our objectives for the children's camp was a well-rounded program, yet one which would be different from that usually encountered in school. In order to fulfill this objective, our program called for the children's arising at 7:15 A.M.; having a flag raising ceremony at 7:45 A.M.; eating breakfast at 8:00 A.M.; and continuing the day with activity periods which included such opportunities as: hiking, exploring a cave, rowing, nature study and various other projects, swim periods with instruction, story sessions, song sessions, talent shows, fishing, marshmallow roasts, bedtime stories, arts and crafts - as clay modeling, leatherwork, basketry, weaving and finger-painting, bowling, bridge and dam building across creeks, overnight hikes, tugs-of-war, tire rolling, wading and splashing par-

ties, playing on the limited amount of playground equipment built for the children by Beacon Lodge's own maintenance man, Max Hamilton, and many other activities too numerous to mention. Also, time had to be allowed in the daily program for bed making, cabin cleanup and taking care of personal health habits - all part of Beacon Lodge's educational program.

Extra-curricular and educational activities during the children's camp included a visit to a Huntingdon Bakery, where the youngsters were allowed to feel portions of dough and the machinery, to learn the process of bread making. The Mount Union Airport afforded an opportunity to feel a plane and later to stand in its backwash to get some of the feeling of the magnitude of flying. They visited the Antique Automobile Museum at Huntingdon and were permitted to touch the collection of ancient autos, valued at nearly one quarter of a million dollars. A trip to the Huntingdon County Fair provided an opportunity for the youngsters to "see" the livestock, poultry and farm machinery and in general, to experience the atmosphere of a typical county fair.

Evidence of the success of this children's camp came by way of letters from parents who anxiously look forward to their children's coming back to Beacon Lodge year after year; expressions of happiness from the children themselves by letter and phone calls.

The Children's Program, now an integral part of our camp, was held for three weeks, prior to the opening of the adult session in 1960. This encampment was made possible, largely, through the efforts of the Lions of District 14-A, under the leadership of Maurice S. Osser, Esq., Chairman of District 14-A Beacon Lodge Committee. Of the 90 children registered for 225 camper weeks, 55 children (for 165 camper weeks) were from this Lions District. The other children came

from various parts of Pennsylvania and were sponsored by Lions Clubs and other interested organizations. The program was quite similar to that of the previous year, except for the addition of new equipment in the playground area. Six swings were provided by the Tarentum Lions Club. Through the efforts of George Montanaro, of the South Philadelphia Lions Club, a T.P. Bike ride was presented to Beacon Lodge. This is a unique piece of equipment which was invented by Dr. Frank E. Dudley, an atomic scientist. The ride is made up of a center post with long radial rods holding six bikes. It is ridden in a 120 foot circle and enables blind people to ride a bicycle unassisted - a truly great thrill! Much to our surprise, this ride proved to be so popular with the adults, that it was deemed advisable to schedule this activity twice daily, so that everyone would have an opportunity to share in this exciting experience.

Campers arrive and depart each Saturday. They usually stay at Beacon Lodge for one week. Of the 350 campers in 1959, nearly half of them stayed for two weeks. Staff members participate in the clean-up and transportation on Saturday. Consequently, there is very little in the way of programs during that day. However, a few activities are scheduled Saturday afternoon, and in the evening, an Orientation Program is conducted for everyone. Each Sunday, arrangements are made to get the campers to the church of their choice, and subsequent activities are scheduled for Sunday afternoon and evening. Monday through Friday is filled with a program of numerous activities with an attempt made to satisfy the needs and desires of all in attendance. The majority of our campers enjoy and participate in many of the activities, while some take part in very few. Some campers like a vigorous program; some like to go at a slow pace; and still others just want to

relax. An opportunity is afforded everyone to do what he enjoys the most.

With all of the activities mentioned previously, I believe that the campers prefer, above all, good food. Secondly, they enjoy renewing old friendships and developing new ones, by talking with others and exchanging ideas as to how each one meets and overcomes the problems of everyday living with his handicap. All age groups are now included and there are no restrictions with regard to race, creed or color.

XII

THE CANTEEN - BETTER KNOWN AS THE "OASIS"

The Canteen is a very popular spot at Beacon Lodge, for both the children and the adults. Here campers can buy souvenirs from a wide selection. The most popular one is the Beacon Lodge Bank, which many of the campers use to save their coins for spending money when they return the next year. The souvenirs are priced from twenty-five cents to $1.00 and most everyone likes to take something home as a happy momento. The Canteen is kept open about 8 hours a day. Soft drinks, coffee, milk shakes, candies of all kinds, nuts of many varieties, cookies, potato chips, pretzels, cigars, cigarettes, ice cream and sundaes can be purchased. As specials, the operator prepares potato salad or macaroni salad to serve with sandwiches. During evening hours, throughout the adult camp period, the operator turns out tasty hamburgers and hot dogs. Thirty persons can be seated at the counter and in the booths. The Canteen is operated by a partially-sighted person during the day. However, she is assisted during the evening by assigned counselors, since this is a very busy time. The juke-box provides music and the camper can select his preference

from the long list of recordings, and many enjoy dancing. The operator is paid a minimum weekly wage, plus a percentage of all receipts exceeding $180.00 weekly. The Canteen usually nets about $150.00 which is applied toward the purchase of new equipment for use therein.

XIII

HOW SUPPORTED

No matter what the program, its source of support and the strength of that support very often determines its effectiveness. At Beacon Lodge, we have several sources of financial aid. Among these are: a. The payment of counselors' salaries through the Extension Education Program sponsored by the Captain Jack Joint School District - this makes it possible to secure an adequate and capable staff for programming; b. Gifts from interested individuals who respond to letters, personal appeals, or who give just because they know of the fine work being done at the camp; or a visitor who comes to the camp and recognizes a need; c. The sponsorship of campers by organizations or friends. This involves the payment of a $40.00 per week fee. This fee, established by our Board of Directors several years ago, was determined as being very near the per capita cost of operating expenses. We must bear in mind, that this consideration does not include the payment of counselors' salaries or capital expenditures. Operating costs for the 1959 camping season were $49.33 per camper week; d. The sale of memberships also provides some revenue. A payment of $1.00 per year entitles the donor to a membership in the Beacon Lodge Club; e. The Lions are the main source of support for the sponsorship of hundreds of campers; for the purchase and donation of equipment; and even for the construction of buildings. They were responsible for nearly $20,000 in sponsorships during the 1959 camp season. They donate toward specific needs, and make unspecified do-

nations which are used where needed most. Some of the equipment they have presented has been a deep freeze, a walk-in refrigerator, electric oven, stainless steel kitchen sink, restaurant mixer, boats with outboard motors, dining room furniture, and several rooms have been sponsored by them - by this, they provide a sum of money which is determined to be necessary to equip the particular room in question. Groups of Lions also come to the camp on weekends, prior to the opening date, to do cleanup jobs, repairs and minor improvements, carpentering, welding, painting, etc.; f. Recognition should also be given to our Board of Directors, both as individuals and collectively. Lewis H. Headings has served as President of the Board since it was first organized. He has given tirelessly of his time and efforts to promote a bigger and better program of camping for blind people. The Board is divided into several committees, each being responsible for various aspects of the program, such as Finance and Audit, Future Development, Redecorating, Property Improvement, etc. Board members live throughout the state and travel many miles to attend meetings. When we are confronted with serious problems, they work together to come up with a satisfactory solution. They make personal contacts with organizations and individuals to secure funds for sponsorships and improvements - many also make personal contributions of cash and needed equipment.

Major improvements by Lions Clubs have included: 1. A new roof in 1951. 2. A new fire escape in 1953. 3. The remodeling of a two-story building located behind the lodge, to provide a dormitory and cook's quarters on the second floor, and a canteen on the first floor. This was done in 1954. 4. The swimming pool in 1956. 5. Two concrete outdoor bowling alleys - one in 1952 and the other in 1959. 6. The boat house converted into the Clearfield Cottage

in 1957. 7. Stainless steel spouting in 1957-58. 8. In 1959, the Lions Clubs of District 14-C contributed to a fund, and constructed a dormitory to house 16 campers. 9. In 1960, the Lions of District 14-C constructed an infirmary - including nurse's quarters, dispensary, waiting room, two sick rooms and two dormitory rooms. Also, in 1960, the Lions of District 14-B constructed a one-story building 66 x 22 to be used as a dormitory for 24 campers.

In our future planning, the Future Development Committee has recommended a master-plan, which was approved by the Board, to expand present facilities so as to accommodate a maximum of 150 persons, per week. In this plan is also included a recreation building-which is particularly needed during inclement weather.

A TRUST FUND has been created to perpetuate the Beacon Lodge program to take care of capital improvements and all other expenditures, except operational costs. This is a permanent fund administered by the Board. Any contribution to Beacon Lodge-Camp for the Blind will greatly exhance the development of facilities desperately needed to complete our program.

XIV

MAINTENANCE

The year around Caretaker who lives adjacent to the camp property in his own home is assisted from early Spring to late Fall by a few workers assigned by the Department of Public Welfare. These workers are assigned to work out their relief grants under his supervision at Beacon Lodge. Also, a maintenance worker is hired during the Summer to work with this group. Cleanup of the grounds; caring jor the grounds during the Summer; repair of buildings, furnishings and equipment; painting and numerous other jobs are assigned to and

and completed by this group. As you can well understand, there is a great deal of maintenance work involved where there is so much ground and so many buildings.

XV

MOST URGENT NEED

Our immediate problem is our sewage system. We are hoping that through the Lions Clubs, we may find a source of financial help to eliminate this problem. Department of Health officials and consulting engineers are now developing a plan to alleviate this sewage problem. Our Future Development Committee, which has been functioning for some time, has outlined expansion and improvement plans covering the next several years. This committee, with the Board of Directors, has placed the construction of a Health Department-approved sewage system at the top of the list. It is obvious that this project is not a glamorous one for a Lions Club, or one on which a group might wish to place a plaque; since it does not lend itself to this category of projects. However, it is certainly vital to the health and future of Beacon Lodge. We are confident that all Lions Clubs will work shoulder to shoulder to help us overcome this difficulty.

XVI

FUTURE SERVICES

As the camp grows and attendance increases, new problems develop and new services need to be provided. In the future, we hope to include in our program, case work service, by having a qualified staff member to interview and observe the camper. Her findings would enable us to provide more benefits, and we could also refer her report to the agency serving the client; thereby, assisting them in

determining the services which should be offered to that particular person. We also hope to have an Occupational Therapist to conduct a more varied crafts program, providing special assistance to those with problems in this area.

XVII

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we feel we have gone a long way in the first ten years of our operation. With a more-qualified and increased staff, we are better able to meet the needs of our campers and we now offer a far better program with greater variety. With the help of the school board sponsoring our counselors, through the Extension Education Program; the varied aid we receive from the Lions Clubs; as well as the help received from other organizations and friends, we have greatly expanded and improved our facilities, so that we can now offer camping opportunities to 90 blind people weekly, instead of the 24 per week during the 1950 camp season. From 24 weekly to 90 weekly

Finally, I have talked a lot about good facilities - making them better, a bigger and better staff, overall improvements to our program, etc., but I think probably what is most important to a large number of campers who come to Beacon Lodge, is the good fellowship; the delicious and plenteous supply of food which they enjoy; the fun they experience as they participate in the various activities; and the knowledge they acquire. The self-confidence that they have gained, while at Beacon Lodge, creates a new philosophy for them, in that they can more courageously accept the challenges of everyday living - which will undoubtedly reflect a much happier, useful and purposeful life.

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(We have available for loan 16mm color sound films and color slides. Free literature, including brochures, will be sent upon request. Write to: Beacon Lodge-Camp for the Blind, Box 222, Lewistown, Pa.)

10/8/2010
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